Listing of Claims

1. (previously amended) A self-checkout system comprising:

   a self-checkout station configured for customer-operated self-checkout of items for purchase;

   a plurality of supervisory data terminals, of which at least one is a mobile terminal comprising a wireless network interface and a biometric data sensor, configured to monitor and supervise self-checkout transactions; and

   a controller operatively coupled to the plurality of supervisory terminals and to the self-checkout station, said controller being configured to administer communications between checkout stations and supervisory terminals, and to send data over a network to a selected supervisory terminal instructing the mobile terminal to initiate a biometric data capture operation, said biometric data capture operation being related to a self-checkout transaction.

2. (previously amended) The system of claim 1 wherein:

   the self-checkout station is one of a plurality of self-checkout stations and the ~~mobile~~ supervisory terminals are operatively coupled to the plurality of self-checkout stations; and

   the data sent to the ~~a~~ mobile supervisory terminal to initiate the biometric data capture comprises data identifying at least one self-checkout station for which biometric data capture is to be performed.

3. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the biometric data sensor comprises a sensor selected from the group consisting of a fingerprint sensor, an iris recognition scanner, and a voice recognition device.

4. (original) The system of claim 1 wherein the biometric data capture operation comprises receiving fingerprint attribute data at a fingerprint sensor.

5. (cancelled)

6. (original) The system of claim 4 wherein the biometric data capture operation further comprises input of a date of birth.

7. (original) The system of claim 6 wherein the controller is configured to query a database using the date of birth as a key to retrieve a plurality of candidate age verification records, each record associating the date of birth with biometric attribute data characterizing a customer fingerprint previously captured at a fingerprint sensor.

8. (previously amended) The system of claim 4 wherein:
the controller is one of a plurality of controllers;
each self-checkout station comprises a co-located one of the plurality of controllers; and
each of the controllers is operatively coupled to the supervisory data terminals.

9. (cancelled)

10. (previously amended) The system of claim 1, wherein at least one mobile supervisory data terminal is a battery operated mobile supervisory terminal.

11. (previously amended) The system of claim 4, wherein:
the mobile supervisory data terminal and the controller interoperate to perform a plurality of supervisory functions associated with customer self-checkout at the checkout station;
the supervisory functions comprise processing of a payment transaction.

12. (previously amended) The system of claim 11, wherein:
the payment transaction comprises a payment type selected from the group consisting of a credit card payment, a debit card payment, and an electronic funds transfer payment; and
processing the payment transaction further comprises receiving a signature input at the mobile supervisory data terminal.

13. (presently amended) A method for self-checkout of items that are sold on a restricted basis, the method comprising:

following scanning of an item by a self-checkout customer, retrieving from a database a record indicating whether the scanned item is a restricted item;

when the item is a restricted item, verifying a characteristic of the customer, said verifying comprising:

receiving a target data input at a biometric sensor, the target data characterizing a biometric feature of the customer;

retrieving from a database a plurality of candidate records, each of said records comprising biometric attribute data associated with a different one of a plurality of customers;

comparing the target data to the biometric attribute data in the plurality of records to identify a matching record;

when a matching record is identified, based on the matched record, determining whether said item sold on a restricted basis can be sold to the customer; and ~~or~~

when a matching record cannot be identified, generating a signal indicating a need for supervisory assistance and initiating an exception process~~,~~ whereby input is received through a system controller from a store attendant using a selected mobile supervisory data terminal to cause a new database record to be generated, said new database record enabling automated age verification of said customer during subsequent purchase transactions.

14. (original) The method of claim 13 wherein:

said restricted basis comprises an age restriction;

verifying further comprises receiving from the customer a date of birth; and

retrieving the plurality of candidate records comprises querying based on the date of birth to retrieve the plurality of records.

15. (cancelled)

16. (cancelled)

17. (previously amended) A method of processing input at a supervisory terminal in a self-checkout system using at least one handheld supervisory data terminal, the method comprising:

at a self-checkout station,

generating a supervisory request signal indicating that input of customer biometric data is required to further the processing of a self-checkout transaction by a customer,

transmitting the supervisory request signal through a system controller to a selected handheld supervisory data terminal, said handheld terminal comprising a biometric sensor; and

at the handheld supervisory data terminal,

receiving the supervisory request signal through a system controller,

presenting a prompt alerting a user of the handheld terminal that input of customer biometric data is necessary;

receiving customer biometric data at the biometric sensor; and

transmitting the biometric data to the self-checkout station for further processing.

18. (original) The method of claim 17, wherein the biometric sensor comprises a fingerprint sensor.